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Power site classifications are usual in such cases, the Secretary stated, to control acquisition or use of the public lands involved while project proposals are being studied.

The Department said the classification does not affect valid existing rights or prevent future mining claims, mineral leases or nonmineral entries, except that nonmineral entries can be made only after determination by the Federal Power Commission that power site values would not be injured. All future claims, leases and entries will be subject to a reservation by the Government for possible power site use. Resources management continues under the Bureau of Land Management.

Spokesmen for native interests, seeking resolution of the native claim situation in all parts of Alaska, had objected to the classification unless native claims to the area were first settled. The Department said it did not regard the matter as reason for delaying protection of the area for power site purposes, since nothing in the classification affects valid existing rights nor prevents future recognition of claims by Congressional action.

The Department stated that the classification will not affect the rate of payment by the State of Alaska toward Federal-aid highway construction. The public lands in the classification will continue to be reported as "public domain" to the Department of Commerce for purposes of computing the Federal share of the cost of Federal-aid projects.

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